

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 20 May 2022 11:36:25 AM

Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Postcode

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a flood-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public

I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

I have worked as a in a Disaster Recovery Centre for 12 weeks providing emotional/spiritual support to flood affected people.

I have observed the moods described as heroic, honeymoon, disillusionment, recovery,

My own home was affected only in a minor way.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#)

1.2 Preparation and planning

There was a communication failure. A single point of failure in the network caused internet and mobile phone communication to be unavailable for five days. Unlike a proper internet infrastructure where a failure at one node would be recovered from by re-routing, there was no failover capability. The "network" could be more properly understood to be a tree where a branch failure is propagated to all its sub-branches. Placing a critical node in a flood zone is a failure of planning.

There was a warning that town water was not going to be available, but this could not be communicated by SMS or internet. I heard of this only by word-of-mouth.

StarLink was a help to some remote areas where residents had purchased this facility for themselves, but this did not allow communication to town.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

There are a multiplicity of federal, state, insurance, and voluntary agencies located at the Recovery Centres to help people to recover personally and for their businesses. The staff of the agencies do their best to help people recover, but the complexity of understanding and navigating the "silos" and their various requirements for making claims is overwhelming for many distressed and traumatised flood victims. This is compounded by the release of new grants, and by agency back offices not processing claims in the expected time, resulting in multiple returns to a Centre where the claimant can at least talk face to face with staff who have the means to discover why there have been delays or errors in processing claims.

Many people are slow to claim. A common explanation is that they know "they have not

been as badly affected as some". This is said by people who have lost nearly everything but their lives. There are still people coming to the centre (18 May 2022) who have only just found out that there is Recovery help.

There are many homeless people that fall outside of the provisions of the grants.

People who have lost their phones and those who had to escape their homes that have subsequently been destroyed are often unable to provide photographic evidence of their loss.

Whereas the staff at the centre can see the affected people and the distress, the requirements are looking at how claims can be disqualified rather than how people can qualify. The Centre staff are affected by the distress of claimants, but the back office assessment staff are remote from this and appear to claimants who are unsuccessful to be uncaring.

Supporting documents or images
